UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/1198
18 December 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 17 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 16 December 1998 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs, concerning agreements made, without the prior consent of the Government of Iraq, between the United Nations and certain non-governmental organizations with respect to demining, and the illegal entry into Iraq of personnel from such organizations.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-39979 (E) 211298 211298

/...

Annex

Letter dated 15 December 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to draw your attention to the references made in the section on Iraq of your report on Assistance in mine clearance (A/53/496), submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session under agenda item 42.

Paragraph 80 states that the United Nations has deployed an international subcontractor in northern Iraq and that demining training and operations had commenced by February 1998. Paragraph 83 states that there are two international non-governmental organizations conducting mine-action activities in northern Iraq, in close liaison with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). Paragraph 85 states that Norwegian People's Aid has increased its operations to include the Suleimaniyah governorate, in coordination with UNOPS.

As you are well aware, Security Council resolutions concerning Iraq stress the need to respect the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Iraq. The provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretariat of the United Nations and the Government of Iraq on the implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) include the stipulation that nothing in the Memorandum should be construed as infringing upon the sovereignty or territorial integrity of Iraq.

The Government of Iraq therefore believes that United Nations cooperation with the aforementioned parties, all of which have entered northern Iraq illegally, may be considered a flagrant violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and of the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding, and that the only explanation for such cooperation being carried out without its agreement is that it is intended to encourage those parties to violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, contrary to international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

While rejecting and condemning the illegal entry of the aforementioned parties into northern Iraq, the Government of Iraq absolutely refuses to accept that the United Nations should continue to cooperate with those parties on Iraqi territory. It requests you to recommend to the Office of the Iraq Programme that the Office take steps to halt this unacceptable cooperation forthwith and that it replace those parties with United Nations personnel and demining experts whose entry into the region with a view to carrying out demining operations in the three northern provinces, as part of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding, has been agreed to by the Government of Iraq.

In raising with you this matter which, for the reasons that we have outlined above, is of great concern to us, I urge you to appreciate the position of Iraq and to respond to our request to end cooperation with the parties referred to above and ask them to leave Iraq as soon as possible, in order to maintain the spirit of cooperation that exists between the Government of Iraq

and the United Nations with respect to the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq